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## Letter dated 27 November 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Ecuador to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to attach the text of the Guayaquil Declaration, which contains a message from the first Intergovernmental Meeting of Experts on El Niño, held in Guayaquil, Ecuador, from 9 to 13 November 1998, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 52/200 of 18 December 1997.

In accordance with the decisions of that meeting and with the provisions of resolution 52/200 and draft resolution A/C.2/53/L.30, I should be grateful if you would have the Guayaquil Declaration distributed as a document of the United Nations during the present session under item 94 of the agenda of the Second Committee, entitled "Environment and Sustainable Development".

(*Signed*) Luis Valencia **Rodriguez**
Permanent Representative

98-37374 (E) 301198 301198

# Annex

## Declaration of Guayaquil

### Guayaquil, Ecuador, 13 November 1998

The Government of Ecuador, representatives from public and governmental authorities from countries affected by El Niño, representatives from concerned agencies and organizations from within the United Nations system, the Permanent Commission of the South Pacific and experts from the international scientific community, as well as participants from other concerned sectors of society, assembled on the occasion of the first Intergovernmental Meeting of Experts on El Niño held at Guayaquil, Ecuador, from 9 to 13 November 1998, called for by the United Nations General Assembly in its resolution 52/200 of 18 December 1997;

*Reaffirm* their commitment to continue their efforts to reduce the negative impact of the El Niño phenomenon, in line with draft resolution A/C.2/53/L.30 of the fifty-third session of the United Nations General Assembly, which calls, *inter alia*, for the full and continued implementation of resolution 52/200;

*Conclude* that the global pattern of climatic extremes associated with the 1997–1998 El Niño event caused loss of life, destruction of shelter and food reserves, disruption of food production and transport systems and sudden exposure to extreme health risks and imposed continuing poverty on peoples and set back development in many parts of the globe;

*Underline* that natural disaster reduction forms an integral part of sustainable development strategies, at all levels, and must take into full consideration the interrelationship between climate variabilities such as the El Niño and the La Niña phenomena, the consequences of global climate change and the vulnerability of communities at risk from natural disasters that may be induced by extreme climatic conditions;

*Emphasize* the need for synergies between science and technology, public and private sector decision-makers and planners, as well as the public at large, in order to ensure the effective planning and implementation of measures that would prevent the negative impact of the El Niño phenomenon and similar climatic variables;

*Call*, at the same time, for integrated approaches to identify potential positive effects of such phenomena, in order to determine how to draw maximum benefits, where possible;

*Recognize* the opportunities for inter-disciplinary and multi-sectoral research, applied science and technology and preventive action, which are provided by the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on El Niño, within the framework of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction;

*Agree* that natural disasters are of global concern and have their most severe impact on vulnerable communities, as well as on the economic and social infrastructures in the developing world, and can therefore contribute to increased poverty if no concrete action is taken towards integrated preventive strategies;

*Expresses their strong conviction* that it is necessary to strengthen scientific research on El Niño and related phenomena in order to improve forecasts and apply the results of scientific research towards the mitigation of damages and the realization of potential beneficial effects, particularly in support of vulnerable communities;

*Express their concern* for the loss of human life and the destruction of economic resources, in particular in the south-eastern Pacific region, which have occurred as a result

of the 1997–1998 El Niño event, as well as in other countries which have suffered recently from the devastating impacts of climatic extremes;

*Reiterate their wish* to intensify international cooperation, including multilateral projects for scientific cooperation and technology transfer designed to enhance the resilience of urban infrastructures and agricultural zones in order to lessen the negative impact of El Niño;

*Conclude* that urgent action is required to strengthen many existing intergovernmental programmes to achieve the objectives of General Assembly resolution 52/200:

- Improved monitoring of the climate system, particularly through the development of regional networks and the implementation of operational systems that have demonstrated proven value. Commitment of new funding for multi-purpose space-based systems and *in situ* observing networks of the Global Climate Observing System is necessary to achieve this objective;
- Expanded ongoing research directed towards improved prediction of climate variability on seasonal to inter-annual timescales. The World Climate Research Programme has demonstrated its effectiveness as a research framework and the commitment of new funds to the Climate Variability and Prediction study (CLIVAR) will give an important impetus to this established activity;
- Development and implementation of new climatic early warning systems at the regional levels, where required, and the strengthening of existing systems. The technological infrastructure, including specialized observing networks and regional communications and computing capabilities for data collection, analysis and prediction are costly and beyond the financial reach of most developing countries. Commitment of new funds will be necessary to establish a network of national and regional centres and is essential for supporting national climate services in countries of the developing world;
- Ensuring that the information needs of national sectors vulnerable to extremes of climate are met through regional and sector specific studies to develop the knowledge of vulnerability and sensitivity essential to underpin sound planning for protection, prevention and mitigation of the negative impact of El Niño and related events. Commitment of new funds for the purpose of impact assessments and the development of appropriate response strategies is required to reduce climate risk and establish safe community habitats;
- Capacity-building at the regional and national levels in the areas of observation techniques, data management and processing and in the use and interpretation of climate information and predictions for the early warning and prevention of natural disasters;

*Emphasize* the importance of developing regional models for the south-eastern Pacific and other affected areas to match the scientific aspects with the social and economic factors;

*Also emphasize* that the south-eastern Pacific region represents one natural, strategic and continuous case study platform for ongoing research on the prediction and monitoring of the El Niño phenomenon on the forecasting of its effects, on projecting its impacts and providing early warning and for developing and applying preventive measures;

*Further emphasize* that it is of utmost importance to join efforts of all countries affected by El Niño for the permanent study and monitoring of the phenomenon globally, in real time, which would enable the timely formulation of prevention and mitigation

measures through the creation of an international specialized center in the south-eastern Pacific region;

*Recommend* immediate action to assess the feasibility of establishing an international center for the research of the El Niño phenomenon, in Guayaquil, as proposed by the Government of Ecuador, and suggest that such action be undertaken within the context of the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on El Niño, and that the results be reflected in the report on the implementation of the United Nations General Assembly draft resolution A/C.2/53/L.30 to the next session of the General Assembly through the 1999 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council;

*Take note, with appreciation*, of the results of the ninth session of the joint Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission/World Meteorological Organization/ Permanent Commission for the South Pacific technical group, held at Guayaquil, from 5 to 7 November 1998;

*Entrust* the Government of Ecuador, the agencies and organizations of the United Nations involved and the Permanent Commission of the South Pacific to present the conclusions and the recommendations of the international seminar on the 1997–1998 El Niño Event: Evaluation and Projections in appropriate international forums related to the impact of El Niño and related climatic events;

*Also entrust* the Government of Ecuador to present the results of the first Intergovernmental Meeting of Experts on El Niño and the present Declaration to the fifty-third session of the United Nations General Assembly.